

Jennifer Duke Holmes



I had never had the opportunity to go to university and had always wished that I had, so it was time for me to decide where my path would take me. In deciding which path to take I considered the work I had been doing up until that point; working in the field of project management, volunteering with the Canadian Red Cross and exploring the creative outlet of independent documentary film. I wanted a career that could combine all of the facets of my previous work experience so I came to York in 2008 to study in the Emergency Management program. That same summer I also chose to study documentary film at Seneca College to enhance my confidence and skills in film-making. Today I am currently in my fourth year of the BA Specialized Honours in the Disaster and Emergency Management program and I will be the first in my family to graduate from university.

What are your future ambitions?

I am planning to use what I have learned to educate, inform and encourage people to get involved to reduce the risks identified within their communities and within the global community.

Thing that you're most passionate about...

Searching for ones path in life isn't always easy and no path is without its dips and bends. I have been curious as to where my path would take me and as time passes the journey seems more focused, more clear than when I began. Instead of focusing on where I want my life to take me, I looked for the patterns in the path I have already taken: humanitarianism, activism, and the arts such as music and filmmaking. I have volunteered with the Canadian Red Cross since 1997 with their International Humanitarian Law program and today I am the Volunteer Operational Lead for the Region of Peel and Dufferin County, Disaster Management Services. In 2001, I began working on what was called the CABAC project for the Red Cross: Children Affected by Armed Conflict. The film was completed in 2003, and my love for documentary film was consolidated. I have since contributed in the making of more than half a dozen films including a documentary that won Best Aboriginal Film at the New Zealand Film Festival. My hope is to incorporate filmmaking as a tool in Disaster Management in order to reach more people and create the much-needed dialogue that will foster disaster resiliency in vulnerable communities.

“The great leader lets the people lead.”

– Lao Tzu –